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TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU

SUBJECT: GOSS VP MACAHR CONTINUED OBJECT OF SUSPICION BY
MANY IN THE SPLM

Classified By: A/CDA Mark Asquino for reasons 1.4 (b) and (c)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Vice President Riek Machar is the object of continued reports by SPLA intelligence sources accusing him of conspiracies to undermine GOSS President Salva Kiir and assume leadership of Southern Sudan. This deep level of distrust of one of the principle leaders of the SPLM portends troubling tensions within the GOSS presidency. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) According to a recent report passed to ConGen Juba by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Military Intelligence, GOSS Vice President Riek Machar and Ex-Foreign Minister of Sudan Dr. Lam Akol held a clandestine meeting with Second Vice President of Sudan Ali Osman and other unidentified high-ranking members of the National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum on August 7, 2008. The report maintains that a number of topics were discussed, but that the primary reason for this meeting was to reconcile Akol with Machar, as their relationship had supposedly become strained. It was also supposedly agreed at this meeting that Machar would assume the presidency of Southern Sudan if Salva Kiir was assassinated.

¶3. (SBU)) The use of students as political tools was also reportedly discussed, and it was allegedly agreed that certain secondary and university students in Juba, Malakal, and Wau would be utilized to propagandize, distribute materials, and stage protests to criticize the Government of Southern Sudan.

¶4. (SBU) The funding of militias was also allegedly a topic of discussion. According to the report, there are militias in the Greater Equatoria region, Upper Nile and Unity states that have received financial support from the NCP in the past. Allegedly, these militias would be granted additional financial support in the near future to ensure their continued loyalty. Another earlier SPLA intelligence report accused Machar of meeting on August 5 with Akol, Former GNU State Minister for Justice Alieu Alieu, and former GNU presidential advisor Telar Deng to discuss the distribution of NCP funds. It was reported that in that meeting funds were allocated to co-opt select SPLA generals. (NOTE: Deng and Alieu became the first-ever SPLM members stripped of their party affiliation in October 2007 following their removal from the party on grounds of insubordination. Akol narrowly escaped the same fate when he apologized directly to Kiir in a Juba-based meeting. END NOTE.)

¶5. (SBU) An August 7 SPLA intelligence report alleged Machar devoted most of his discussion with his interlocutors to the topic of re-establishing a Council of Chiefs office in Juba. The Council of Chiefs is described as an organization of leaders of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) that re-located to the North. In the past this council has supposedly received funds from the NCP to resettle their people in the South. This Council of Chiefs office is reportedly intended to be a political organization controlled by the NCP but

operating within the South. The reported motivation for the opening of this office is to have a political organization that is not overtly allied with the NCP to lobby for a Border Defense Force that will respond to National Government taskings. The establishment of this office is to be allegedly financed with 150 Million Sudanese Pounds.

¶6. (C) Comment: Although there may be good reason to remain suspicious of Machar,s overall political intentions in the South, this constant stream of reporting by SPLA military intelligence against him cannot be verified. The rumors fuel conspiracy theories that there are elaborate plots being hatched against the GOSS with large amounts of NCP money supposedly being funneled to Machar to carry them out. Machar,s history of receiving funding from the North to fight the SPLA during the 1990s (and the slaughter of Dinka by his troops at the time) makes him for many in the South a man who cannot be trusted. The presence of Nuer oil militias paid for by Khartoum in Unity State adds to the perception that some Nuer are working against the interests of the South. While there may be little truth in the latest rumors, it is significant that they are being presented in reports from SPLA intelligence to Kiir. This, in turn, contributes to the continued deep mistrust and bitterness that persist in the SPLA and SPLM against Riek Machar. If the rumors in fact have no basis, it would be in Machar,s interest to dispel them, demonstrate he is a team player in the SPLM, and work to repair his relationship with Kiir.

ASQUINO